Tells the Facts and Names the Names

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The Case of Father Jerry

In 1996, a senior official in the Catholic church confided to a friend of CounterPunch, the Catholic church in America had thus far paid out $500 million to settle priest abuse cases. On July 24, 1997, a Dallas jury imposed a $119.6 million in overall damages - the largest penalty ever levied on the Catholic Church - for what was described as "grossly negligent handling" of the sexual abuses perpetrated by one priest. If the Dallas verdict holds up on appeal, the National Catholic Reporter reckons the estimated amount of pay-outs related to clergy sex abuse will approach $1 billion.

Many of such cases never reach the court filing stage and of those that do, the vast majority never go to trial. Often the testimony of the victims is so powerful that Church officials move immediately to negotiations for a settlement. We've also been told that the go-ahead for pay-outs often amounting to millions of dollars comes from Rome.

Like other orders in the vast world network of Catholic organizations the Society of Jesus is headquartered in Rome and we invite the Jesuits' top men to consider as a matter of most urgent concern the case of Father Jerold W. Lindner, known as Father Jerry. The case against him, if believed, discloses a record not only of appalling sexual predation on children as young as four, but also a callous negligence on the part of his Jesuit superiors in California that we find entirely breath-taking.

Lives are terribly damaged by such abuse and though the testimony against Father Jerry has been said to be damning it appears quite possible that there may be a far wider scale to his predations. We are running this story in part because we hope that anyone with knowledge of Father Jerry's activities at least since 1975 will contact the attorney, Michael Meadows of Casper, Meadows & Schwartz, in Walnut Creek, California, who is acting for the plaintiffs.

The allegations against Father Jerry, which he denies, entered the legal arena last year, when Meadows filed suit on behalf of Bart and William Lynch. Twenty-four years ago, when the boys were four and eight years old, they attended a camp-out near the Bay Area of families associated with the Christian Family Movement. As Kathleen Smith, a mother involved with the Movement describes it, "CFM is an international group of lay people, approved by the Vatican and the Oakland California diocese". Mrs. Smith recalls that in the mid-1970s she approached Father Jerry to act as the spiritual advisor for the lay organization. He accepted and acted in that capacity until 1979.

Bart was four, he remembers, when Father Jerry assaulted him in the course of a CFM camping trip. "Violence is the key issue, even more important than the sexual abuse. I literally feared for my life. Whispering in my ear, Father Jerry said, 'You want to live, don't you. Don't tell anyone, or I'll kill you.'" This was after Father Jerry had sodomized the four-year

(**"Father Jerry"**, *continued on page 4)*

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Our Little Secret

Drug Money

Michael Petrelis, a San Francisco-based gay activist, has outed a number of closeted gay conservatives and political figures during the past few years (most spectacularly in the case of former Rep. Steve Gunderson, whom Petrelis doused with a drink at a gay bar in Virginia). Now Petrelis and a colleague, Michael Lauro, are outing the huge salaries pulled down by the heads of many non-profit AIDS organizations: $155,900 for James Loyce of AIDS Project Los Angeles, $148,000 for Pat Christen of the San Francisco AIDS Foundation, and $141,521 for Jim Graham of the Whitman-Walker Clinic in Washington, DC.

Petrelis says such lavish compensation often comes at the cost of cutting services such as rental and medical subsidies for AIDS victims. Graham's salary at Whitman-Walker climbed to its current level from a base of $119,120 in 1992. During that same period, the budget for the clinic's program to pay the utility bills of people with AIDS fell from $148,883 to $82,698.

It's also ironic that much of the money spent by AIDS groups comes from grants made by pharmaceutical companies - who have profiteered mightily off people with AIDS. Burroughs-Wellcome (now Glaxo) made billions off AZT before finally lowering prices in response to protests by AIDS advocates. Yet prices for most AIDS drugs remain exorbitant today. Triple combination drug therapy, the most potent means of fighting full-blown AIDS, runs to about $12,000 a year, with so-called protease inhibitors being especially expensive. Average annual retail prices range from about $5,400 for Crixivan (marketed by Merck) to $6,900 for Fortovase (Roche) to $8,200 for Norvir (Abbott).

Meanwhile, pharmaceuticals comprise the most profitable legal industry in America, with profits four times above the average of the Fortune 500 between 1988 and 1995. Protease manufacturers Merck, Roche and Abbott racked up 1996 profits of $3.8 billion, $2.9 billion and $1.8 billion, respectively. A report by the Golden Gate chapter of ACT UP calls drug company profiteering "a number one killer of people with AIDS".

Those same firms and other drug company profiteers are pumping money into AIDS groups. To take just one example, the DC-based National Association of People with AIDS receives funding from Merck, Glaxo, Roche, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Alza Pharmaceuticals and Optima Nutrition.

Some activists wonder if receipt of drug company money has dampened enthusiasm among some AIDS organizations for taking on the issue of drug company price gouging. For example, most AIDS groups—with the notable exception of AIDS Action—stood by last year as drug companies successfully lobbied Congress to kill a law that would have dramatically lowered the price that numerous heath care organizations pay for AIDS drugs. Stephen LeBlanc of ACT UP-Golden Gate—one of the few AIDS groups that does not take drug company money—is a veteran of MASSPIRG, a public interest group affiliated with Ralph Nader. "If people found out we were working so closely with chemical manufacturers - and being funded by them — it would have destroyed our credibility", he says. "There's no quid pro quo but there is no critical distance between the [AIDS] community and drug companies."

Others believe that the drug companies, by funding and forming tactical coalitions with AIDS activists, have effectively co-opted many. Dennis DeLeon, president of the Latino Commission on AIDS in New York, fears that such alliances "make people go soft in their willingness to confront industry. Some groups have such a symbiotic relationship with the companies that it's become impossible to distinguish them from the companies' policy and outreach departments."

It's Payback Time!

In the fall of 1996, Senator Ernest Hollings of South Carolina inserted an amendment into a Federal Aviation Administration spending bill that made it all but impossible for Federal Express workers to unionize. Hollings insisted that he had not been motivated by political contributions from Fedex and pointed out that the company was not a major donor to his campaigns.

That was then. The cash comes now. The Center for Responsive Politics has just reported that Federal Express is now Hollings's No. 1 contributor. On October 31, 1997, company executives, including CEO Fred Smith and his wife, contributed nearly $22,000 to the senator's re-election war chest.

Chump Change

Poor Johnny Chung. The one-time FOB who had ready access to the White House has been pilloried by the press for allegedly trying to funnel $100,000 from the government of China to the Clinton/Gore re-election campaign. Meanwhile, the US corporations at the forefront of the new China lobby are treated tactfully by the press.

Take Boeing, which in recent years has sold about one in ten of its airplanes to Peking. According to lobby disclosure records, the company retained seven outside lobby shops to work to improve trade relations between China and the United States in 1997. Included here are Clark & Weinstock, home to former congressman and Newt Gingrich crony Vin Weber, and Akin, Gump where Vernon Jordan, Monica Lewinsky's placement officer, is a grand poobah.

All told, Boeing deployed 25 lobby-

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ists to work for nurturing ties with China, at a cost of approximately $670,000. That's nearly seven times more than Chung supposedly sluiced into the political system - and it doesn't include Boeing's in-house expenditures on the issue.

Pass the Knee-Pads

Nina Burleigh has raised eyebrows among the blue-noses for admitting in an essay in Mirabella that in her time as a White House correspondent for Time magazine she had entertained lust in her heart for the Supreme Groper. Recounting a game of hearts with President Bill and his aide and confidant Bruce Lindsay, on Air Force One Burleigh tremulously evokes the flush of pleasure she felt when she realized Bill was admiring her legs. "I felt incandescent...If he'd asked me to continue the game of hearts back in his room at the Jaspar Holiday Inn I would have been happy to go there and see what happened." Burleigh's bottom line: "I'd be happy to give him a blow-job just to thank him for keeping abortion legal."

Here at CounterPunch we like Nina and wish her well in her new career as a freelancer in New York. We remember a pleasant lunch in her company where she remarked casually of Bill Clinton that when it came to women and sex he was "pathological", a rather different take than her glowing prose in Mirabella.

But her remark about the grateful blow-job is a sad comment on where the women's movement has ended up. No matter that Clinton has savaged working class women with his welfare bill, destroyed the chance of decent health care reform for the foreseeable future, sacrificed blue collar workers and farmers north and south of the border on the altar of free trade, helped create a vast gulag of slave labor in America's prisons (where he has also been in part responsible for a 400 percent surge in the number of black female prisoners). No matter all that so long has he lights his candle on the altar of Choice.

When Carter Kept Quiet

Meanwhile the departure of Tina Brown, another Bill fan ("his height, his sleekness, his newly cropped iron-filed hair and the intensity of his blue eyes"...sleekness? Bill Clinton?) took as much space on the front-page of the New York Times than the death of Nigeria's chief opposition leader, Moshood Abiola. Already angling for Brown's job is the only virgin ever to have appeared on Crossfire, Michael Kinsley, who was quoted in Howard Kurtz's piece on Brown in the Washington Post as saying, "She gets a lot of criticism as being obsessed with buzz. But buzz is what brings you to the magazine. She saved the magazine, editorially. It's the hottest magazine being published."

It's a terrible day for American letters when the top contenders being considered for the editorship of the New Yorker are apparently Kinsley, David Remnick, Kurt Anderson and Vanity Fair's Graydon Carter. Those who examine the fearless Carter's editorial choices at Spy magazine will find that in all the snide assaults on sacred cows in that periodical, there was one person who remained untouched, seemingly sacred and inviolate to the fearless Graydon. Yes, it was Conde Nast's supremo, Si Newhouse, who is choosing Brown's successor. Those noting this hands-off policy by Carter also recall a retainer paid by Conde Nast's Vogue to the nibble-witted editor.

Gallagher printed exchanges from James Nations of Conservation International, as he discussed modalities of news suppression with Chiquita.

Arnett: Spine of Putty

All in all, it's been an instructive summer for students of American journalism. After fierce pressure from the Pentagon, assisted by Colin Powell and Henry Kissinger, CNN backed down from its own story of the use of sarin nerve gas against US deserters in Laos. We had the repellent spectacle of CNN eminence Peter Arnett saying from a hideout in Oregon that he had only been a newsreader for the story.

Back when CNN/Time first put out the nerve gas report viewers and readers were under the impression that Arnett had been deeply involved as a reporter. We're mixed on this. On the one had, Arnett is being cowardly and misleading about his role, since he did some of the interviews. On the other hand, we're always pleased to have illusions stripped away, and supposedly great American reporters like Arnett or Mike Wallace or Morley Safer or Dan Rather revealed as the mere script-readers that they mostly are.

Banana Blowup

Our biggest regret this summer is the outrageous treatment meted out by the corporate chieftains at the Cincinnati Enquirer to their reporter Mike Gallagher for his excellent series on Chiquita Banana and its loathsome CEO, Carl Lindner (no relation to our cover story priest Jerry Lindner, so far as we know).

The Enquirer is owned by Gannett whose spineless role in the GM minority dealer scandal we've recounted over the past months. In this instance the actual content of Gallagher's series was almost entirely ignored in the press reports which focused on the supposed causes of his firing. The Enquirer bought wholesale Chiquita's charge that Gallagher had improperly acquired more than 2,000 voice-mail messages. Gallagher says he got them from an executive at the company.

Across a series of installments Gallagher wrote a magnificent exposé of a first world company exploiting its third world plantation workers, poisoning them along with the entire ecosystem. Not least in his recollections was the part that some enviro groups have played in supporting Chiquita. Specifically, Gallagher printed exchanges from James Nations of Conservation International, as he discussed modalities of news suppression with his paymaster at Chiquita Banana. Gallagher also explored at length how Chiquita organized the crushing of labor unions in Honduras, Guatemala and Ecuador, and forged intimate ties with the military elites.

In sum, it's not surprising that Gannett immediately surrendered in the face of Chiquita's threats and fired Gallagher. But it's startling that the newspaper printed the series in the first place.

Gallagher, whose very fine piece on the Fluor Daniel company's dangerous bungling of the clean-up at the Department of Energy's Fernald nuclear facility we cited here in CounterPunch a year ago, faces a special prosecutor in Chiquita's company town of Cincinnati. Now is the time for watchdog news groups and outfits like Investigative Reporters and Editors to spring to his defense. ■

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("**Father Jerry**", *continued from page 1*)

old. "I remember blood in my pants and Father Jerry burying them in the woods."

Marylou T, a CFM parent, recalls that afternoon. "It was a mystery to me as to why Father Jerry ended up with the Lynch boys. That afternoon when it came time to make dinner everyone came back except Bart, Will and Father Jerry. People went in little groups looking for them. Finally, after some time passed, Father Jerry and the two boys appeared from the woods. Everyone clapped."

William Lynch remembers that "during Memorial and Labor Day camp-outs Father Jerry forced my brother and me to have sexual contact while he was sodomizing me." We should stress here that these are not accounts evoked by the dubious therapeutic processes associated with so-called "recovered memory." These are recollections that the Lynch brothers say that they have born painfully virtually all their lives. Until recently a burden of shame prevented them from discussing aspects of the assaults even between themselves.

As Meadows and his investigator began to excavate Father Jerry's career they reached numerous families in the Christian Family Movement and eventually came in contact with two women now in their late twenties and early thirties, both with stories to tell about Father Jerry. Court documents describe Debbie L remembering that when she was about eight Father Jerry was at her family's house for dinner. They had fondue, one of her favorite meals. Because of the fondue, Debbie thinks this might have been a special day for her, such as her first communion. There was a tradition in her family that if you dropped your bread in the fondue, you had to kiss someone of the opposite sex. Debbie recalls Father Jerry deliberately dropping his bread, then turning to her and winking, telling her out loud that he would kiss her later.

After dinner Debbie went down to the "sub-basement" possibly to play a game with one of her siblings, or possibly to hide. In any case she ended up alone. She heard her mother's footsteps on the floor just above her. Then came Father Jerry's footsteps on the stair and Debbie recalls "trying to run away". Father Jerry then began "grabbing me and pinning me down on the bed which was there." She remembers "him laying on top of me. He had his robe on...kissing me..". She next recalls locking herself in the bathroom and refusing to come out. When she was finally made to come out, to say goodbye, "I couldn't even look at him."As noted above, Father Jerry has denied all charges of sexual misconduct. Specifically, in the case of Debbie L's deposition testimony Father Jerry has testified in a deposition that, "I don't remember doing this. I don't think I did it".

Father Jerry's brother Larry Lindner had complained to the Jesuits in 1991 about molestation that Larry says he had personally witnessed.

Krista N is a member of another family in the Christian Fellowship Movement. Krista was about seven at the time of an episode which occurred when she went with her family to visit friends. She was wearing a dress belonging to the daughter of another CFM family and looked "cute" in it. In court documents Krista recollects Father Jerry "drinking a lot before dinner" and then, when she and her friends were playing in a room "Father Jerry appears in a doorway and motions to me with his finger, indicating I should go over to him".

Finally Father Jerry sat down and put Krista on his lap. "He held onto me tightly for a good half an hour and because he was a priest, I obediently let him hold me. My back was to his front." When the call for dinner occurred all the children ran out of the room, but Krista says Father Jerry would not let her go. Then "he turned me around to face him. He started kissing me and making sighs. His lips were wet and he used his face and tongue all over my face and neck...making strange sounds that I hadn't heard before, sort of like sighs and groans".

Like the Lynch boys, both Debbie and Krista have undergone painful difficulties adjusting to adult circumstances, and have endured self-destructive behavior, acute depression and an overwhelming sense of guilt and shame.

As Michael Meadows, the Walnut Creek attorney acting for the Lynch brothers, embarked on the case, the discovery process revealed the fact that Father Jerry's brother Larry Lindner had complained to the Jesuits in 1991 about molestation that Larry says he had personally witnessed.

Back in the early 1980s, Larry Lindner was in the Los Angeles Police Department. "In 1985, while in Lancaster, California, where we lived for thirteen years, I caught my brother molesting my daughter, Tiffany, who was 9 at the time."

In fact this was Easter Sunday, 1985, according to documents acquired in discovery. "Jerry was in our living room with my daughter. The kitchen, living room and dining room were all together. I was sitting at the service bar at the pass-through between the dining room and the kitchen, having a cup of coffee. I had been outside feeding the animals, and had just returned inside the house and sat down at the bar. I don't think Jerry saw me come back in.

"I could hear some conversation about playing the tickle game. I was sitting there, watching them play, and I began to really watch how they were playing. They were just tickling. Then they starting playing 'blankie,' and he would lay on the floor, on his back, and she would then lie on top of him, as his blanket. He would grab her and roll her on top of him, and then rub her up and down his body. All of a sudden I saw that he had an erection.

"I told Tiffany to go outside, and as she left, he rolled over onto his stomach. I then told him to leave immediately, telling him that he was aroused and that wasn't right. He

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wouldn't get up from the floor till his erection subsided. He then got up and I followed him out to his car. I was so afraid he would see my four children again.

"The kids wanted to know where Uncle Jerry was. I told the kids that I caught Uncle Jerry doing things that no adult should do to a child and I told him to leave. We were all standing in the kitchen, and the kids were acting strange. I asked the kids what was going on. The kids said no, he's your brother. I said I don't care, I want to know. The two girls told me that Jerry had kissed them by holding their face real hard, and then sticking his tongue in their mouth.

"My oldest son then told us a story about him, that Jerry had sexually molested him every night during a family reunion. He was eleven years old at the time. When I found that out, it made a lot of sense, because every morning I would find my son curled up in a ball, in the living room with the girls. I asked him why he wanted to sleep with the girls. He answered, just because. However, my mom insisted that he stay in the bedroom at night.

"My son told us that he was orally copulated and sodomized.

"When asked, while standing there in the farmhouse kitchen, why he didn't tell me at that time, and he said because he was your brother. The children were raised Catholic.

"The next day, after work, I drove down to Loyola where Jerry was, and went into the rectory and asked to talk to Jerry. I confronted him with what my children said, and asked him whether my children were telling the truth. Jerry said your children are telling the truth. I told him, 'I should arrest you, but I want you to know that you are sick, you are a pedophile and need help.' Jerry promised to seek help, but didn't."

Larry Lindner has lived in Klamath Falls, Oregon since 1990. Recently he learned of yet another episode from those Lancaster years. Under the regular pretext of taking his niece to the local store Father Jerry would instead drive out into the desert and force his niece into various sexual acts. Larry's daughter states the return drives were accompanied by threats of her never seeing her family again should she tell what happened.

In his confrontation with his brother, Larry Lindner said that even though he was an LAPD cop working in the criminal division at the time, he would not press matters officially so long as Father Jerry sought help, a condition to which Father Jerry readily agreed. Today, Larry Lindner expresses great regret that he did not instantly call LAPD's Exploited Child Unit. As things played out, it was more than five years before Larry took action, impelled by news from within his family leading him to believe that Father Jerry had done nothing on his own behalf.

"I told him, 'I should arrest you, but I want you to know that you are sick, you are a pedophile and need help.'"

Larry was also stirred to action by his daughter, now 15, experiencing some painfully vivid recollections of the assaults in Lancaster by her uncle.

We come now to the conduct, in sofar as it is known, of the Jesuits on being told of the allegations against one of their order, a man who had been teaching at the Jesuit-run Loyola High School in Los Angeles for 23 years. Father Jerry is now 53. From 1964 to 1966 he did two years' novitiate at what is now Sacred Heart Jesuit Center of Los Gatos. He graduated from Loyola University, a Jesuit institution in Los Angeles, in 1968. He took a Master's degree from St Louis University in 1971 and a Master's in Divinity from the Jesuit School of Theology, Berkeley, in 1976, whereupon he began his teaching career, starting at San Francisco's St Ignatius High School.

In the early 1990s Larry Lindner spoke about his brother's sexual assaults to his local priest in Klamath Falls, who advised him to call the Rector, Father Richard Cobb, at Loyola High School. He did so and told the Rector about his brother's conduct, and his concerns about his brother needing help.

According to Larry Lindner, the Rector reacted by saying, "Oh my God, the handwriting has been on the wall and all of us have been oblivious to this. Your brother has been involved in different activities or clubs with kids, from Boy Scouts to science fiction groups to chess clubs, and he was also involved in taking youth to Europe." (These were lengthy excursions, involving as many as 47 boys on a trip.)

Larry Lindner says the Rector thereupon advised him to call the Father Provincial, Paul Belcher, the senior Jesuit in California, at the Novitiate in Los Gatos. He left a message and a day later got a call from the Father Provincial, to the effect that though Father Jerry denied all charges he was being sent for "further evaluation". Amid his conciliatory remarks, the Father Provincial probed, asking Larry Lindner repeatedly what he wanted "out of this", and was Larry

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looking for the Jesuits to pay the bills for his children's therapy. According to Lindner, he said he wasn't interested in money, only help for his brother. This time around, Lindner was determined to follow up, to see what was being done. But his subsequent attempts to reach the Father Provincial were rebuffed, he says, until the final attempt, which found a curt and uninformative Father Provincial.

Father Jerry has testified in a deposition that the Jesuit response in 1992 was to allow him back into the classrooms of Loyola High School after one semester's hiatus at St Luke's psychiatric hospital in Silver Spring, Maryland, for evaluation and treatment. St Luke's is not a Jesuit institution. After this interlude, Father Jerry resumed his previous life, including the summer trips to Europe with young groups and the multifarious after-school activities.

In 1997, Casper, Meadows and Schwartz filed on behalf of Will and Bart Lynch against the California Western Province of the Society of Jesus, charging gross acts of sexual misconduct against children by one of the order's members.

But before the formal charges were laid, the Jesuits were made aware of the accusations against Father Jerry made by the two Lynch brothers. In May of 1997, so Father Jerry has testified, he met with the Father Provincial, John Privett and also with Father Sonny Manuel, another senior Jesuit. According to testimony, Manuel said it was okay for Father Jerry to continue teaching at Loyola High, but that he couldn't lead youth groups to Europe because the agency running the trips would have to be informed of the lawsuit.

In early June of 1997 Father Jerry has testified he was sent by the Jesuits to a California psychiatrist, and then again told he could resume normal teaching activities. In August of 1997 his superiors informed him he was being placed on leave of absence and being sent back to St Lukes, where he enrolled on September 1, for a nine-month session.

After Larry Lindner made his accusation to the senior Jesuit in California, he says he was never again contacted.

He returned to California in May of 1998 and has said that the Jesuits informed him that on completion of "the evaluation" at St Luke's he was once again free to return to the classroom. Father Jerry has indicated he's now looking for a change in career, though not, it seems, vocation.

Father Jerry taught at Loyola High School from 1982 to 1997. This Jesuit-run school is in a predominantly Puerto Rican and Korean neighborhood and many of the youth in the activities run by Father Jerry have come from these two ethnic groups. Father Jerry's outreach campaigns to youth extended beyond California, not just in the travels to Europe but also to the Midwest during his sojourn in St Louis when he was taking his Master's.

In St Louis, so his brother says, Father Jerry won the sobriquet "Father Flanagan" because, instead of staying in Jesuit housing, he took over an abandoned house and with the help of car dealerships, fixed up the place as a refuge for homeless boys, lived there with them. Larry Lindner says that he gathered from family members that Father Jerry left St Louis under a cloud.

On the face of it, the Jesuits appear to have been strangely lax in the wake of appalling allegations against one of their members. After Larry Lindner made his accusation to the senior Jesuit in California, he says he was never again contacted. Nor were his children. Following two sessions in St Lukes, the Society of Jesus was content to see Father Jerry return to the classroom with no hindrance from his Order.

Here at CounterPunch we applaud the courage of the Lynch brothers in embarking on their struggle and urge any of our readers with information on the topic to contact the Lynchs' lawyer in Walnut Creek.

Michael Meadows can be contacted at 925-947-1147. ■

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